

Cottage Grove Est. 1889 Sentinel

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WEATHER

Clouds and sun with a high of 52 and a low tonight of 37. Full forecast on A5

COLUMNIST

Betty Kaiser's annual Christmas letter
B1

CHRISTMAS TALE

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Lane County Chambers of Commerce unite in plea to Governor

CG Chamber President & CEO Shauna Neigh joined five chamber presidents seeking relief for local small businesses

By NED HICKSON
AND DAMIEN SHERWOOD
COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

“They’ve done the best they can ... without support to meet mandated changes.”

—Shauna Neigh, Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce

Leaders representing many of Lane County’s small- and medium-sized businesses across the region have sent a co-signed plea for support to Governor Kate Brown and elected representatives on behalf of their constituent businesses.

Co-signers included Cottage Grove Chamber President & CEO Shauna Neigh, along with chamber presidents from Springfield (Vonnie Mikkelsen), Eugene (Brittany Quick-Warner), Florence (Betti-

na Hannigan), Oakridge Westfir (Lynda Kamerrer), as well as CEO of Travel Lane County Kari Westlund — all of whom are asking for financial and regulatory relief.

“Too many of our small businesses will not survive the winter.

The health and welfare of our families and communities cannot thrive without them,” said Quick-Warner. “They didn’t ask for this. They didn’t vote for this. Their condition is no fault of their own and the economic damage to our local

businesses and families statewide is in the billions of dollars, not millions.”

Hannigan added that, “If a small business dies it impacts more than just the owner,” explaining that the repercussions not only impact employees and their families but also business property owners and their families, and the vendors to those businesses and their families. “If this keeps up, the only take-out food will be from the state’s bread lines,” said Hannigan.

“You can hear the despair in

See **LETTER 6A**

The Joy of Giving



PHOTOS BY GARY MANLY/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Community Sharing and the Tree of Joy program distributed food boxes and gifts to the community on Monday at Trinity Lutheran Church. Both groups more than doubled their output from last year. In all, 484 Christmas food boxes and 538 gifts for school-age children were passed out to scores of vehicles driving by the church while some portion of the donations were even delivered to families. This year was marked by a collaboration with Be Your Best and the Rural Organizing Project. “We’re just so grateful for the help from [those groups],” said Community Sharing Executive Director Mike Fleck. “It was a great success with their help.” Tree of Joy volunteer Joyce Settelmeyer said an influx of local generosity and leftover toys donated from the Toys for Tots program helped exceed expectations. “I’m always impressed with how generous our community is,” she said.

Swinging Bridge recognized with merit award for engineering

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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The J. Polk Currin Swinging Bridge received more recognition this month when it won an Award of Merit for Small Projects under \$10 million from Engineering News Record (ENR) Northwest.

“I was very excited to learn that our Swinging Bridge project was

recognized a second time by leaders in the engineering field,” said Friends of the Swinging Bridge member Dana Merryday, who attended the virtual event. “In both cases the awarding organization recognized the innovative mix of modern and durable materials while preserving the original design and feel of the original. They also noted that the community was

very determined to bring back this historic bridge...”

ENR is an industry publication and annually recognizes major projects. The Northwest region includes Oregon, Washington and Alaska.

The bridge has been a prominent city landmark since the 1920s, but was closed in 2016 after being deemed unsafe by the city.

A community-led push to restore the iconic structure resulted in a project which enlisted the design and construction expertise of Ausland Group and Hamilton Construction.

The new suspension design aimed to capture the distinctive swinging and aesthetic character

See **AWARD 10A**

COVID-19 vaccine arrives at Lane County hospitals

By NED HICKSON
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As COVID-19 immunizations began arriving around the state last week, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) finalized its recommendations for who will be the first to receive doses of new COVID-19 vaccines.

Oregon’s Phase 1a COVID-19 Vaccine Plan and Recommended Sequencing aligns with federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for broad groups to be

See **PLAN 7A**

Governor gives update on results of Special Session

By MARK BRENNAN
FOR THE SENTINEL

Governor Kate Brown held a news conference Tuesday afternoon to update the public on the arrival of the first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines produced by Pfizer-BioNTech and plans for the distribution of those and another vaccine from Moderna, which is scheduled to arrive soon. Brown also discussed the results of a special session of the Oregon Legislature called by the governor to deal with

See **BROWN 8A**

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